**Planned RPM Activities for 2011 – 2012**

**Institution:** Highline Community College

**Core Team Members:**

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**Given your project progress to date (as described in your end-of-year report), summarize how you will be continuing and extending the work in the coming year as we come to the official end of the grant:**

* **Describe the major activities/interventions being implemented in 2011-12, including what’s being done, who’s involved, the expected outcomes, and what evidence will you gather to assess the effectiveness of the specific interventions—in particular, describe any plans aimed at supporting shifts in individual teaching practices, strengthening focused collaborative inquiry among groups of faculty, and building a stronger department culture to support reflective teaching**
* **What will you be doing this year to increase the likelihood that the work done through the grant will be sustained beyond the immediate grant funding?**

Our activities for the coming year will focus on (1) evaluating the effectiveness of our new curriculum, (2) refining and adjusting the curriculum, (3) separating faculty support from faculty inquiry, and (4) adjusting the management of our program to ensure the most essential pieces will continue beyond the end of this grant.

**Evaluating effectiveness**

Our existing methods for measuring the effectiveness of our curriculum – tracking student achievement on mastery tests, quarterly retention and pass rates, administering surveys of student satisfaction – have been sufficient for our decision-making during the first year of implementation. We will continue to gather and analyze this data this coming year. We will also begin monitoring the achievement (pass rates) of students in the college-level math courses who started in our precollege sequence as a way of determining whether our curriculum is truly removing barriers as opposed to simply “pushing them down the road.” The data analysis and reporting will be handled by Dr. Helen Burn and Tonya Benton (Highline’s Institutional Researcher), with input from the Core Team about other useful measures. This discussion of additional measures was started at the recent Summer Institute.

We would like to obtain additional feedback from the students about their experience with our new curriculum through focus groups. Dr. Burn and Darryl Brice organized our first focus group this past July. It is generally difficult to draw students to focus groups at Highline, but 22 participated in July, which is significantly better than any of our previous attempts as part of Achieving the Dream. At the summer institute, we also discussed ways to collect data from faculty about changes to instructional practices.

**Refining and Adjusting the Curriculum**

Our success implementing our new curriculum this past year means that we can turn our attention to improving the alignment/transition between courses, establishing greater consistency in instructors’ interpretation of the learning outcomes, and identifying/broadly implementing teaching methods that help the largest number of students achieve those learning outcomes. We have already begun work on several of these. Using data and conversations with colleagues, the Core Team is trying to improve the pacing and coherence of topics in Math 81 and 91 by shuffling some content between them. We are making instructors teaching the introductory college-level courses aware of differences in the content knowledge and training of students coming from the precollege curriculum and suggesting alternative strategies to help students achieve the learning outcomes. These activities will continue in the coming year. One new activity is having Allan Walton, a math instructor who was involved in the development of the Math 98 (Intermediate Algebra for Calculus) course, use release time in winter quarter to identify strategies for improving the low success rates in that course. We are also looking at ways to extend our activities to include Math 71 (Review of Arithmetic).

To establish greater consistency among instructors, we are increasing the level of detail about each learning outcome in our support materials for instructors. We plan to systematically collect copies of final exams from each instructor to facilitate identification and discussion of differences in instructors’ expectations. Exam collection will be handled by the lead instructors for Math 81 and 91 – Barbara Hunter and Aaron Warnock, respectively – and the exams will be reviewed by a subgroup of the Core Team. Lastly, in addition to mastery-test data, we will encourage the use of common assessment questions in order to further document and explore student learning.

**Separating Faculty Support from Faculty Inquiry**

Our new approach to FIGs will formalize the process of engaging in inquiry as well as acknowledge the different needs of faculty. One structural change is to have the lead instructors for the Math 81 and 91 courses focus on the faculty support tasks while a separate FIG coordinator – Erik Scott – will oversee inquiry activities. To help individual faculty develop an inquiry mindset, we may theme FIGs around specific goals, such as

* Faculty support – helping faculty understand the expectations for teaching our curriculum
* Examining student work – for faculty interested in examining students’ conceptions
* Evaluating pedagogy – for faculty wanting to identify effective practices and promote adoption by more faculty members

The operation of each FIG will be directed by written protocols, and we hope the leadership of each FIG can rotate quarterly to promote greater awareness and ownership of the inquiry process. Within a FIG, the focus of activities will be around the student attributes and teaching for understanding. A possible cycle of activities is given below – each item is the focus of a single meeting.

* Faculty orient themselves to the inquiry process – purpose, activities, building common understanding of essential ideas like student attributes or teaching for understanding.
* Discuss strategies to investigate a topic of interest.
* Implement strategy in current quarter or, if not possible, obtain samples of student thinking that can inform the implementation in the subsequent quarter or observe someone who has implemented a similar strategy.
* Examine work produced by students during implementation.
* Reflect on what was learned and determine whether to retain, modify, or discard strategy. If strategy is discarded, choose something new to investigate.

Instead of emphasizing CATs and reciprocal observations as “tasks worth trying,” we will bring them in as helpful tools to accomplish inquiry.

**Adjusting Program Management for Sustainability**

While we are hopeful that there may be a second round of funding, we are working to institutionalize the lead faculty model. To be sure, providing lead instructor support AND attempting to do inquiry warranted and truly required release time. In separating support from inquiry this year, we are exploring the workload associated with the lead faculty role. The lead instructors are turning their attention to building procedures and resources that can be maintained without additional release time.

In addition, we are identifying the data that is most useful for informing curricular and pedagogical decisions so we can continue to obtain the most critical information when Dr. Burn no longer has release time to support our Institutional Researcher. We have also discussed regularly presenting this data to the rest of our colleagues as part of departmental meetings.